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# MEETING HOUSE ECHOES

Edith A. O'Leary Senior Center

Fall 2015 - Volume 38

North Reading, MA 01864

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## Dept. of Elder Affairs

Tel: 978-664-5600

Email: mprenney@northreadingma.gov

## Senior Center

157 Park Street  
Third Meeting House  
on the Common

## Senior Center Hours:

Mon.-Thur. 8am-4pm

Fri. 8am-1pm

## Director

Mary S. Prenney

## Clerk

Mark Meehl

**Pgm. Mgr.** Jean Fitzgerald

## Van Driver

Mechele Cronin

## Meal Site Managers

Ron Visconti, Brenda Bugden

## Home Delivered Meals

**Driver** Donna Ruck

## Council on Aging Board

Atty. Brian Snell, Chair

Maureen Donato, Secretary

Rich Wallner V. Chair

Eleanor Fritsch

Joe Veno

Frances Cheney

## Representatives to

## Council on Aging

Lt. Mark Zimmerman,

N. R. Police Department

Deputy Chief

Barry Galvin,

N. R. Fire Department

Selectman Steve O'Leary

## Friends of the COA

## Officers

Hugo Wiberg III, Pres.

Angela Mauceri, V.Pres.

Tom DeSwarte, Treas.

Jean Fitzgerald, Sec'y.

## COUNCIL ON AGING MISSION STATEMENT

The Council on Aging advocates for older adults by helping to meet their needs in areas of health, economic, social and cultural welfare.

The Council encourages maximum independence and seeks to improve the quality of life of citizens of the Town of North Reading.

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### *From the Director — Mary Prenney*

I hope you all had a safe, healthy, relaxing summer and most of you are now looking forward to the cooler days of autumn (of course, not so cool that we have to turn up those dreaded thermostats).

We had a terrific summer here at the O'Leary Senior Center. We stayed cool, watched movies, had some awesome lobster rolls and even ventured out on a trip on Salem Harbor. We are now looking forward to another great season (just like Tom Brady and the New England Patriots) at the Center. As you will read in this newsletter, we have our exercise classes that are always popular, plus many exciting events coming up. And remember, we also serve a hot or cold lunch at the Center every day at noon... all you have to do is call a day in advance before 10AM to reserve your lunch. Not only is it a nutritious meal (donation \$2), but you get to visit with old friends and neighbors, or meet a new acquaintance

The O'Leary Center staff would like to wish Sandy Carriker a wonderful, healthy retirement and thank her from the bottom of our hearts for all the wonderful work she has done through the years, working with Christian Community Service. Not only have the Senior Citizens of North Reading, but the entire Town have been blessed by her caring, compassionate, ever-giving of herself to help others less fortunate, in their time of need.

### *From the Editor — Katharine Barr*

Here comes New Englanders' favorite Season! Crisp, cool days, perfect for walks with friends (including 4-legged ones!), attending your granddaughter's soccer games, apple picking at a nearby farm, and watching the New England fall foliage show off its glowing reds, yellows and golds. This is a glorious time of the year — I hope you can get out and enjoy it. And I hope you'll stop by the Senior Center in your travels for a nice, hot cup of coffee or tea and see what we're planning for the new season. See you there!

***Our goal is to help North Reading Elders age safely in place with dignity and independence in the homes and community they helped build...because there is no place like home!!!***

## DINING AND TRANSPORTATION

### Senior Dining at the Center

Mon. — Fri., noon, \$2.00 donation  
(Call before 10:30AM the day before)

### Home Delivered Meals

(formerly Meals on Wheels)  
Mystic Valley Elder Services  
(781) 324-7705, Ext. 300

### FREE Van Transportation

In town, for medical appointments,  
shopping, local errands, Senior Center  
Family Medical Center, Wilmington  
Lahey Satellite Clinic, Wilmington  
(Call one day ahead to arrange a ride)

**The following Senior Center Programs are FREE  
unless otherwise noted**

## HEALTH & WELLNESS

### • Blood Pressure Screening

Mondays 1PM — no appointment needed  
At Edith A. O'Leary Senior Center

- **BEST** — Pat Brennan, Instructor  
(Balance Energy Strength Training)  
Meets 9AM Monday mornings and works  
toward strong bones, energized muscles, better  
balance.

- **Exercise** — Emma Palmer, Instructor  
Meets 9:30AM Tuesdays and Thursdays, and  
involves gentle stretching, toning,  
strengthening.

### • SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders)

A counselor is available every Tuesday  
afternoon— by appointment only — to help answer  
questions and fill out applications.

### • Elder Care Advisor

from Mystic Valley Elder Services is available — by  
appointment only — to offer information, advice and  
education in confidential setting, to elders and their  
families.

### Assistance with Fuel Oil and Food Stamps

(SNAP) Applications is available at the Center  
call for an appointment.

## ALSO AVAILABLE AT THE CENTER:

### • Card Games

Tuesdays & Thursdays 1:00PM

### • Bingo

Wednesdays 1:15PM

### • Senior Chorus — *Marcia Cutlip, Director*

Mondays 10:30AM. Singing is good for  
mind, body and soul!

### • Wii Bowling

Mondays 1:00PM

### • Bridge

Tuesdays at 1PM

### • Project Linus Coffee Hour

1st Friday of the month, 10 AM

## Enjoy Tennis All Year 'Round

Join men and women seniors playing round robin tennis  
up to 3 days a week at Northeast Tennis in Middleton  
(close to the N. Reading line). Have fun year-round on  
clay in the summer, and indoors in the winter. For more  
information, call Jean Osborn at 978-864-0516 or Dick  
Feyl at 978-744-3827.

## "Silver Alert" Program

This program is geared to families and residents that  
have Alzheimer's disease or some other cognitive im-  
pairment that might cause a person to wander and be-  
come lost.

Voluntary information submitted to the Police Dept.  
would help locate the missing person by having on rec-  
ord certain biographical information stored at the North  
Reading Police Station.

Please stop by and take an application, or for more in-  
formation, contact Sgt. Derek Howe, NRPD  
(dhowe@nrrpd.org).

## Need a Ride? Call TRIP.

If you need to go places, and you don't or can't drive,  
here's an easy solution. Designate a friend, neighbor as  
your TRIP driver and that person will take you wherev-  
er you need to go. As your designated driver, he/she  
will be fully reimbursed for mileage they drive you. So  
it's a win-win situation for everyone! To sign up, con-  
tact MVES at 781-324-7705. Get out and enjoy your  
life!

## Ready to Date Again? Tips for Single Seniors

If you're tired of just sitting around, watching TV, and would like to get out, meet new people, and enjoy an active life again, here are five suggestions for helping you join the dating world again.

**Remember — your children are not your keepers.** While support from your children may be important to you, in the end, your decisions are your own to make.

**Find the right avenue.** Online dating is not for everyone. You may prefer to meet new friends while involved in group activities — church, your neighborhood or condo group, the local senior center — whatever you're comfortable with.

**Communicate your expectations.** Friendship? Companionship? Remarriage? Be sure you are clear as to what you're looking for in a new relationship.

**Are you ready for sex?** You may not be looking for a sexual relationship right away, but if and when you are, be sure to practice "safe sex." The AARP reports that STDs are on the rise among seniors and can lead to other infections.

**Meet in a public place for the first date.** And tell a friend or family member where you're going and when you're going to be there. It's for your safety.

Most of all, realize that seniors are entitled to the same enjoyments as younger generations!

## Financial Scams on Elders

Sgt. Derek Howe, NRPD

Financial scams targeting seniors have become so prevalent that they're now considered "the crime of the 21<sup>st</sup> century." They often go unreported or can be difficult to prosecute, so they're considered a "low-risk" crime.

It's not just wealthy seniors who are targeted. And it's not always strangers who perpetrate these crimes. More than 90% of all reported elder abuse is committed by an older person's own family members, including adult children, and others. Here are some potential scams to look out for:

- Medicare/health insurance fraud
- Counterfeit prescription drugs
- Funeral & cemetery scams
- Fraudulent anti-aging products
- Telemarketing scams
- Online/internet fraud
- Investment schemes
- Homeowner/reverse mortgage scams
- Sweepstakes & lottery scams
- The grandparent scam

If you suspect you've been scammed, call the Police Dept. right away. And also your bank, if money has been taken from your accounts. Stop scams in their tracks!

## Got Unused or Outdated Prescription Drugs?

Sgt. Derek Howe, NRPD

Sgt. Howe reminds residents there is a free, safe, anonymous way to dispose of unused or expired prescription medications and hypodermic needles that are capped or in a special "sharps" container. There are MedReturn Drug Collection units available in the lobby at the North Reading Police Department (150 Park Street) where they can be disposed of — anonymously — at any time. If you have any questions about this program, please call the police station at (978) 664-3131.

## Join Us for (Free) Movies at the Center!

Bring a friend, relax, and enjoy some of the best new and classic movies. Movie times are 1:15PM. This fall, we're showing:

Oct. 11	Young Frankenstein
Nov. 10	Woman in Gold
Dec. 1	Holiday Film (to be announced)
Jan. 4	My Old Lady

## Seniors & Addiction—It Could Happen to You!

Seniors are more likely than ever before to have problems with alcohol abuse, marijuana use, or addiction to painkillers and other pills. As people age and suffer loss of friends and loved ones, and experience more pain and illness, many have few qualms about turning to addictive substances to ease grief, loss, isolation and boredom.

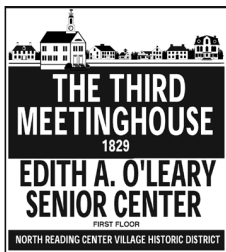
Prescription drugs most likely to be abused by older adults include anti-anxiety drugs like Klonopin, sleep aids like Ambien, and painkillers like OxyContin. The number of 50+ age people addicted to these substances is predicted to double between 2001 and 2020, from 2.8 million to 5.7 million!

If you suspect a loved one is abusing alcohol or drugs, get help immediately, through their doctor or local medical clinic. Or, in an emergency case, local EMTs. Unnecessary drug use, overuse of alcohol or use of illicit drugs reduces the quality of life at any age. No one deserves to have the brightness of life taken away by drug or alcohol abuse.

## In Memory of/In Honor of" Envelopes.

Envelopes are available at the O'Leary Senior Center to remember a deceased individual, or to honor an individual or group with a donation to the "North Reading Friends of the Council on Aging." Donations will help us fund the good works of the Center and the population it services. Envelopes may be picked up at the Center during regular hours:

Mon./Thurs. 8AM – 4PM; Fri. 8AM – 1PM.



**NORTH READING ELDER AFFAIRS**  
**157 PARK STREET**  
**NORTH READING, MA 01864**

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FALL 2015 VOL. 38

Address Service Requested

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### **Save These Dates:**

Oct. 29 Halloween Party at 12 noon, with Tom Smith  
Nov. 5 Veteran's Lunch at 12 noon  
Nov. 10 Nutrition Presentation at 10:45am with Candace Quigley  
Dec. 15 Christmas Party at 12 noon, with Uptown Girls  
Jan. 21 New Year's Party at 12 noon, with Jim Moses

### **North Reading Food Pantry**

The Food Pantry, located in the North Reading Town Hall on North Street, is open Mondays 9 – 10:00AM, and every 1st and 3rd Monday 7:00 – 8:00PM. Transportation is available on Monday mornings. Please call in advance to arrange a ride.

### **Eating Local – It's Fun!**

This past year, we have been "Dining Local," exploring North Reading restaurants up and down Main Street, and most recently, along Rte. 62. The van leaves the Center at 11:30AM on the second Tuesday and last Thursday of each month. This is a fun way to go out for lunch, meet new and old friends, and leave the driving to us! On Oct. 20, we'll be sampling the goodies at the Great American Tavern, 303 Main Street. Come join us — call the Center to reserve your seat. "Dining Local" will resume in January, after the holidays.

### **Our Thanks To:**

- Meadow View Center for Wednesday Bingo Donuts
- Washington Street Dunkin' Donuts for Tuesday Morning Treats
- Sue Kramer for keeping our gardens looking amazing
- Farmer Dave's in Dracut for sharing their produce
- Katharine Barr for her creative "New England" Raffle Basket
- All who donated yarn and fabric for "Project Linus"
- Sue Magner, Jackie King and Liz Donaldson for making the celebration for our WWII Veterans a huge success
- NR Parks and Recreation for sponsoring a "RIDE" to their wonderful Concert & BBQ Series
- NR Community Impact Team for sponsoring presentation on "Learn To Cope"

## Let's Go Shopping!

The Center is offering free transportation to the Market Basket in the Wilmington Plaza Shopping Center on Rte. 38, on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of every month. Our van will start picking up shoppers at 8:30AM and return to pick you up at the Plaza at approximately 10:30AM. Those who wish to park at the Center and take the van must be at the Center by 8:15AM. Shoppers are allowed up to 6 shopping bags, and reusable bags are encouraged. Please call the Center (978-664-5600) by Monday of that week to reserve your seat. Seating is limited and will be on a rotating basis.

## Special Alert!!

A new group of North Reading citizens has formed the North Reading Senior Action Team (NRSAT). The purpose of the Team is to create a politically viable group of active seniors (and others) to improve lifestyle opportunities for seniors and others in housing, recreation activities, intergenerational community involvement, lifelong learning, and transportation issues.

NRSAT will be looking for seniors and others to assist with these exciting improvements. Please watch for the Team's future announcements, which will be coming soon. If you would like to get involved sooner, or want more information, contact Rich Wallner at rich@lakesidefi.com or (978) 807-3961.

## Asthma in Older Adults

Sue Swansburg, RN, N. Reading Board of Health

Asthma is a chronic lung disease that sends many older adults to the hospital. Although asthma cannot be cured, there are ways you can keep it under good control:

- Be aware of symptoms and warning signs
- Use medications properly to treat and prevent asthma episodes
- Avoid the things that "trigger" your symptoms and can make your asthma worse

An asthma-friendly home checklist is available from the New England Chapter of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America [www.asthmaandallergies.org](http://www.asthmaandallergies.org) or call 781-444-7778. NOTE: Of adults aged 65 and older with asthma, only 1 in 5 have it well-controlled (MA DPH May 2011).

## "Extra Help" With Medicare Prescription Drug Costs

What is "Extra Help"? It's a special program helping those on a very limited income with their prescription drug costs. Your resources must be limited to \$13,440 for an individual or \$26,860 for a married couple living together. **Include** such things as bank accounts, stocks and bonds. **Do not include** your home, car, or any life insurance policy.

Your annual income must be limited to \$17,505 for an individual or \$23,595 for a married couple living together. Even if your annual income is higher, you still may be able to get some help. An example where your income may be higher is if you or your spouse support other family members who live with you. Apply online at [www.socialsecurity.gov/extrahelp](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/extrahelp).

Call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) to apply over the phone or to request an application, or apply at your local Social Security Office.

## Dental Coverage for MA Seniors

Dental coverage for seniors in Massachusetts is complicated. There are several plans, each with their own eligibility rules. We will briefly outline a few of them here. But our best advice is to contact your local Medicare office, or Senior Center.

**Original Medicare:** Medicare does not pay for routine dental care, only if the medical problem is more extensive than the teeth or structures supporting them.

**Medicare Advantage/Medigap Plans:** They may cover some dental services, such as preventive dental checkups.

**VA Medical Centers:** the VA provides comprehensive dental care for eligible veterans. Contact VA New England Health Care System at (617) 323-7700.

**Medicaid/Mass Health:** Limited dental services may be available to Mass Health members. Call 1-800-207-5019 for information on services covered and a list of dentists in your area accepting Mass Health patients.

**Universities and Colleges:** Discounted services are provided by dental students, supervised by faculty, typically at 1/3 to 1/2 of private practice costs. Call the Senior Center (1-978-664-5600) for more information.

## NEWS FROM MYSTIC VALLEY ELDER SERVICES (MVES)

### **Staying Healthy With Medicare – a Message from SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) Program:**

Here are some tips for staying healthy with Medicare or a Medicare Advantage plan, like an HMO:

Some of the services include:

- colorectal cancer • mammograms • Pap tests and pelvic exams, prostate cancer screening • bone mass measurements • cardiovascular screening • flu and pneumonia shots • alcohol misuse screening and counseling • depression screening • obesity screening and counseling.

There are very specific rules which state when and how often Medicare will pay for the above services. For a complete list of free preventive services, go to [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) or see a SHINE counselor.

For further assistance with any Medicare issue, contact the SHINE Program. Trained SHINE counselors offer free, confidential counseling on all aspects of Medicare and related health insurance programs.

To make an appointment, call the regional SHINE office at Mystic Valley Elder Services in Malden at 781-388-4845. Please leave a message and a counselor will return your call within 2 business days.

### **It's Coming — Medicare's Annual Open Enrollment**

If you have a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan or a Medicare Advantage Plan (HMO, PPO), you should be receiving information from your Plan by the end of September. It is important to **read** and **save** this information as it explains the changes in your plan for 2016.

During Medicare's Annual Open Enrollment (Oct. 15 – Dec. 7), you will have a chance to change your plan for next year. If you never had a drug plan, this is your opportunity to join one. SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone...on Medicare) Counselors can help you understand your plan changes, as well as explain other options you may have. **Appointments are limited, so make your appointment soon.** Please bring your Medicare card and list of prescription medications with you to your appointment.

Trained SHINE counselors offer free, confidential counseling on all aspects of Medicare and related health insurance programs. To make an appointment with the SHINE counselor here, please contact the O'Leary Senior Center, 978-664-5600. You may also call the Regional SHINE office at Mystic Valley Elder Services in Malden at 781-388-4845. Please leave a message and a counselor will return your call as soon as possible.

## **There's a Lot to Love About the Library!**

Danielle Masterson, Youth Services Librarian

Here are some of the exciting goings-on at the Flint Memorial Library this fall. And there's more – stop in to learn more!

### **Free Music!**

Stop paying for Spotify! Freegal allows you to download 5 songs per week and stream 3 hours of music per day with your valid library card. Access Freegal through our website — [www.flintmemoriallibrary.org](http://www.flintmemoriallibrary.org) — by downloading the Freegal app on your smartphone or by going to [www.freegalmusic.com](http://www.freegalmusic.com) directly.

### **New Hours!**

The eagerly-anticipated new hours at the Library begin Sept. 16. The Library will now open every day at 10AM. Beginning Sept. 12, we will be open 10AM – 5PM each Saturday until Memorial Day.

### **Free Access to Top Magazines!**

Starting Sept. 1, the Library will offer downloads of 50 top magazines, for you to read from the comfort and convenience of your iPad, iPhone, Kindle, computer or tablet. Among the choices are:

- Cosmopolitan • Rolling Stone • Seventeen • Food Network Magazine • Marie Claire • National Geographic • Macworld • WIRED... and many, many more!

### **Learn Watercolor Painting From an Expert.**

If you've ever wanted to learn to paint with watercolors, here's your chance! William Duke, well-known local artist with a studio in Salisbury MA, leads a class at the Center on this technique. Classes are at 1PM on Tuesdays, Oct. 13, Nov. 10, and Dec. 1. The \$20 cost includes all materials.

### **Let's Hit the Road!**

We've got two exciting road trips planned for this fall — Oct. 8 we'll be traveling to the Wenham Tea House in Wenham, MA for a delicious lunch and a stop at their charming gift shop. Van leaves the Center at 11AM. On Nov. 17, we'll be visiting the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, MA, one of New England's premier museums, also with an impressive gift shop. Admission (Seniors) \$15, (cost of lunch is additional). Van leaves the Center at 9AM.